



This is an official
DHEC Health Update

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**Updated Guidance for Health Care Providers: Nontuberculous Mycobacteria
Infections Associated with Healthcare Facilities**

Summary

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has assisted in the investigation of recent clusters of nontuberculous mycobacteria (NTM) infections associated with health care facilities, both inpatient and outpatient office settings. Reports of NTM infections are rare in these settings. Isolated cases of NTM infections are not reportable but outbreaks or unusual disease occurrences are reportable to DHEC.

As a result of these recent investigations, DHEC is advising health care providers and health care facilities to carefully evaluate infection prevention measures and patient care areas for potential contamination of sterile equipment and medical supplies from unsterilized water sources.

Background

NTM are environmental, opportunistic human pathogens, and are a potential source of infection in healthcare facilities if unsterilized water or ice contaminates medical equipment or medical supplies that may be used for sterile or minimally invasive procedures. NTM bacteria have been identified in samples collected from environmental and water sources where case patients underwent procedures. Potential sources of contamination have been addressed by infection control and engineering approaches when possible.

Recommendations for Health Care Providers

Because the agents are ubiquitous in the environment, DHEC is advising health care providers and health care facilities to evaluate for the possibility of contamination of sterile medical equipment and supplies from water or other environmental sources. The following preventive measures are recommended:

- Medical supplies should not be stored adjacent to water outlets.
- Avoid use of unsterilized water or ice for sterile procedures.
- If equipment requires the use of ice or tap water, meticulous efforts should be made to prevent contamination of the sterile field.
- Minimally invasive medical procedures performed in office settings should follow standard infection control practices using a sterile field away from water outlets. This includes preparation of sterile materials or medications.

For More Information

- General information about NTM and disease:
<http://www.nationaljewish.org/healthinfo/conditions/ntm>
- Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health Care Facilities:
http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/pdf/guidelines/eic_in_hcf_03.pdf

DHEC contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements

Reporting of outbreaks is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2014 List of Reportable Conditions available at:

<http://www.scdhec.gov/Library/CR-009025.pdf>

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region.

LOW COUNTRY PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester
4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600
N. Charleston, SC 29405
Phone: (843) 953-0043
Fax: (843) 953-0051
Nights / Weekends: (843) 441-1091

Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper
219 S. Lemacks Street
Walterboro, SC 29488
Phone: (843) 549-1516
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: (843) 441-1091

Allendale, Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg
932 Holly Street
Holly Hill, SC 29059
Phone: (803) 300-2270
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: (843) 441-1091

MIDLANDS PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Kershaw, Lexington, Newberry, Richland
2000 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2749
Fax: (803) 576-2993
Nights / Weekends: (888) 801-1046

Chester, Fairfield, Lancaster, York
PO Box 817
1833 Pageland Highway
Lancaster, SC 29720
Phone: (803) 286-9948
Fax: (803) 286-5418
Nights / Weekends: (888) 801-1046

Aiken, Barnwell, Edgefield, Saluda
222 Beaufort Street, NE
Aiken, SC 29801
Phone: (803) 642-1618
Fax: (803) 643-8386
Nights / Weekends: (888) 801-1046

PEE DEE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION
Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion

145 E. Cheves Street
Florence, SC 29506
Phone: (843) 661-4830
Fax: (843) 661-4859
Nights / Weekends: (843) 915-8845

Clarendon, Lee, Sumter
PO Box 1628
105 North Magnolia Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: (803) 773-5511
Fax: (803) 775-9941
Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845

Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg
1931 Industrial Park Road
Conway, SC 29526-5482
Phone: (843) 915-8804
Fax: (843) 915-6502
Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845

UPSTATE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Anderson, Oconee
220 McGee Road
Anderson, SC 29625
Phone: (864) 260-5801
Fax: (864) 260-5623
Nights / Weekends: (866) 298-4442

Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick
1736 S. Main Street
Greenwood, SC 29646
Phone: (864) 227-5947
Fax: (864) 953-6313
Nights / Weekends: (866) 298-4442

Cherokee, Greenville, Pickens
PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 372-3133
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: (866) 298-4442

UPSTATE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION (continued)

Spartanburg, Union
PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 372-3133
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: (866) 298-4442

DHEC Bureau of Disease Control
Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology

1751 Calhoun Street
Box 101106
Columbia, SC 29211
Phone: (803) 898-0861
Fax: (803) 898-0897
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902



www.scdhec.gov

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update	Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
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